

PANHANDLE PATH TO HEALTHY LIVING

Spring 2022



Stress Awareness Month

Everyone from young children to older adults experiences stress at some point. Stress can result from issues with work, school, family, or finances. Stress not only affects our mood, but our health as well. Muscle or body aches, inadequate sleep, and unintended changes in how much we eat can be caused by stress.

"The good news is that once you identify signs of stress, you can learn coping skills, and in time strengthen your resiliency to stress", says Julie Tijerina, Extension Program Specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.

Follow these simple tips to reduce stress.

- Breathing exercises:** Hold your breath for 4 seconds and release for 4 seconds. Do this for 5 minutes.
- Sitting meditation:** Sit in a chair, back straight, feet flat on floor, and hands in your lap. Breathe through nose in and out.
- Walking meditation:** Find a quiet place 10-20 feet in length. Walk slowly, keep balance. Walk a length, turn around and repeat.
- Before a test or stressful event:** Do neck and shoulder rolls, squeeze and relax hands and fingers, or do some simple stretches.

Additionally, other steps that can be taken to help cope with stress include:

- Eating Healthy**
- Exercising**
- Taking time to relax**
- Practicing Mindfulness**
- Getting restful sleep**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension offers programs like Walk Across Texas to help reduce stress. For more information contact:

Lizabeth Gresham



Path to Self-Care



Self-Care Sessions

Join us for 7 mini sessions of self-care topics for a 30-minute (max) weekly group activity and resource sharing via Zoom or hybrid format.

Mondays at 12:30 pm

Apr 18

Zoom

Taming Your Grief Monsters

Kimberli Phillips, PhD, LMSW

Alyssa Jenkins, LMSW

Apr 25

Hybrid

Work-Life Balance

Valerie Spanel, LPC

May 2

Hybrid

Yoga

Rynn Burkett, RYT500, TIYT

May 9

Zoom

Mindfulness

Miquela Smith

May 16

Zoom

Physical Exercise/Walk Across TX

Lizabeth Gresham

May 23

Zoom

Managing Bad Habits & Reestablishing Healthy Habits

Lidia Dailey, LCDC

June 6

Hybrid

Resiliency

Lesley Webb, M.Ed., LPC

Register: <https://rebrand.ly/SelfCare22>

Path to Walking For Wellness

Join Walk Across Texas Today!

Staying physically active can improve and support your overall health!

Join Walk Across Texas & increase physical activity, reduce chronic disease and feel great!

Walk Across Texas! is an eight-week program designed to help Texans establish the habit of regular physical activity using a fun and motivating team approach.

Each team may include up to 8 (can have less) team members, all working together towards the goal of 832 miles!

Watch your team's progress and how you compare to other teams as you go on our online portal!

To start a team, contact:

Potter Agrilife Agent-Lizabeth Gresham@ag.tamu.edu



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Path to Gardening For Wellness

Health Benefits of Gardening

Planting flowers and vegetables can reap bountiful bouquets and delicious harvests for your dining table. But did you know gardening also can do wonders for your well-being? Here are eight surprising health benefits of gardening.

1. Gardening can build self-esteem.

Maybe you don't think you were born with a green thumb, but after tilling, planting, nurturing and harvesting plants, you might see a slightly different person in the mirror: a person who can grow things receives additional satisfaction and reward from watching their hard work produce.

It always feels good to accomplish new tasks, and if you can grow a garden, what can't you do?

2. Gardening is good for your heart.

All that digging, planting and weeding burns calories and strengthens your heart.

"There are physical benefits from doing the manual labor of gardening," says UNC Health internal medicine physician Robert Hutchins, MD, MPH. "It's hard work to garden, and it provides some cardiovascular benefit."

3. Gardening reduces stress.

Gardening can help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.

"Gardening gives you a chance to focus on something and put your mind to work with a goal and a task in mind. Dr. Hutchinson says "which is helpful especially now with so much illness and death and talk of death, just to see things growing and thriving."

4. Gardening can make you happy

Getting dirt under your nails while digging in the ground can make you pretty happy. In fact, inhaling *M. vaccae*, a healthy bacteria that lives in soil can increase levels of serotonin and reduce anxiety.

5. Gardening can improve your fine motor skills.

All that digging, planting and pulling does more than produce plants. Gardening also will increase your hand strength. What a great way to keep your hands and fingers as strong as possible for as long as possible.

6. Gardening is good for the whole family.

Gardening can be a solo activity or an opportunity for bonding with your family and friends. The happiness and stress relief that gardening provides is a great thing to share with loved ones. Also, gardening has special benefits for kids. Early exposure to dirt has been linked to numerous health benefits from reducing allergies to autoimmune diseases.

7. Gardening can give you a boost of vitamin D.

A healthy dose of vitamin D increases your calcium levels, which benefits your bones and immune system. Exposure to sunlight helped older adults achieve adequate amounts of vitamin D. Just don't forget your sunscreen.

8. Growing your own food can help you eat healthier.

If you have a vegetable, herb or fruit garden, you're more likely to be health conscience about your food choices and incorporate fresh produce in your daily diet.

Fuel Your Body! Healthy Eating

from
Head to Toe

Choose the best foods that will fuel your body to live, learn, and play. The best foods are those that are filled with body-benefiting nutrients. What are the nutrients in foods that help build a healthy body?

Minerals

Calcium is the champion for building strong bones and teeth. This mineral also helps your body maintain a normal heartbeat.

Best choices: • Dairy products like milk, yogurt, and cheese

- Leafy green vegetables
- Broccoli
- Calcium-fortified orange juice, soymilk, and cereals



Phosphorus is essential in forming healthy teeth and bones. It's also part of every cell in your body.

Best choices: • Dairy products like milk, yogurt, and cheese • Meat • Fish

HEALTHY FATS

Healthy fats like olive oil, canola oil, almonds, and avocados are those that are unsaturated, which are usually liquid at room temperature. These fats help keep your brain, blood vessels, and heart healthy.



GOOD BACTERIA

Yogurt contains "good bugs" which help you digest your food, keep your intestines healthy, and help keep you from getting sick.



Vitamins

Vitamin A (Beta carotene) plays a very important role in your eyesight. It helps you see better at night and helps you see in color, too.

Best choices: • Low-fat milk fortified with vitamin A

- Dark orange fruits and vegetables
- Dark green leafy vegetables



Vitamin C helps fight infection and can keep you from getting sick. It also helps keep your muscles and skin healthy and helps heal cuts and bruises.

Best choices:

- Oranges • Strawberries



Zinc plays an important part along with vitamin C in your body's defense against getting sick. It also helps cells grow and heal wounds.

Best choices: • Meats

- Nuts
- Beans and legumes



Iron helps red blood cells carry oxygen to all parts of your body. Your body needs oxygen to stay alive.

Best choices: • Meat and fish

- Eggs • Beans • Dried fruits
- Leafy green vegetables like spinach
- Whole grains

• Whole grains

- Sweet red peppers
- Tomatoes • Broccoli



Vitamin D is an important team player in building strong bones and teeth and helping to absorb calcium. Your body actually makes vitamin D when you get sunlight exposure on your skin.

Best choices: • Low-fat milk fortified with vitamin D • Fish

- Egg yolks • Mushrooms
- Fortified cereal

Vitamin E works hard to protect the cells and tissues in your body from damage.

Best choices: • Whole grains

- Leafy green vegetables • Vegetable oils
- Egg yolks • Nuts and seeds



Magnesium helps muscles and nerves function, keeps your heart beating strong, and strengthens your bones.

Best choices: • Whole grains

- Nuts and seeds • Green leafy vegetables • Avocado • Beans
- Bananas • Low-fat milk

Potassium keeps your muscles and nervous system working by keeping the right amount of water in your cells and body fluids.

Best choices: • Potatoes

- Bananas • Tomatoes
- Dark green vegetables
- Yogurt and low-fat milk
- Oranges, grapefruit and tangerines



PROTEIN

Foods that are high in protein help your body build, maintain, and repair tissues.

Best choices:

- Meat, poultry, and fish
- Beans, peas, and legumes
- Nuts and seeds
- Eggs



FIBER

Fiber helps us feel full, aids in digestion, and helps remove waste. High fiber foods include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts, and seeds.



Lizabeth Gresham is a Family and Community Health Agent with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension **Potter** County. Family and Community Health helps Texans better their lives through science-based educational programs designed to improve the overall health and wellness of individuals, families, and communities. FCH focuses on topics such as child and adult health, nutrition, childcare, financial management, and community safety, and building strong families. Our goal is to encourage lifelong health and well-being for every person, every family, and every community. <https://Potter.agrilife.org>

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Enjoy Healthy Recipes
[dinnertonight.tamu.edu.](http://dinnertonight.tamu.edu)

Slow Cooker Peach Cobbler

Ingredients:

- 3 pounds frozen peaches (thawed & drained) or fresh peaches (peeled & sliced)
- 3/4 cup whole wheat flour or GF flour
- 3/4 cup whole grain cornmeal
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 cup sugar or sweetener of choice
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons plain nonfat Greek yogurt
- 1/3 cup milk of choice
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract



Directions:

1. In a medium size mixing bowl. mix together the flour, cornmeal, baking powder, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and salt.
2. Add in Greek yogurt, milk, egg and vanilla extract; mix well.
3. Add peaches in an even layer on the bottom of the slow cooker
4. Pour the flour mixture on top of peaches.
5. Slow cook on low for a minimum of 4 to 4 1/2 hours.
6. Store any leftover cobbler in the refrigerator. Do not reheat food or leftovers in the slow cooker; instead reheat on stove top or the microwave.